

County of Los Angeles
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SOCIAL SERVICES

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March 5, 2007

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Bryce Yokomizo, Director

SUBJECT: COUNTYWIDE FOOD STAMP OUTREACH CAMPAIGN

In July 2005, in response to your Board's direction, DPSS implemented a collaborative Countywide Food Stamp Outreach Campaign. This memo is to provide you with an update on the Campaign, and our Department's ongoing efforts to reduce food insecurity and hunger by increasing Food Stamp participation in Los Angeles County.

As of December 2006, the successful progress of this Countywide plan has resulted in 97,896 Food Stamp Only households, a 19% increase in the Food Stamp Only caseload, compared to the Countywide average of 82,295 Food Stamp Only households for the period of October 2004 through September 2005. This plan includes the following elements:

- Two Intake Eligibility Workers (EWs) in each of the 23 DPSS Food Stamp district offices is dedicated to outreach efforts. These Outreach EWs accept and assist with Food Stamp applications at non-traditional sites, such as health clinics, food pantries, soup kitchens, Farmer's Markets, churches and schools. Additionally, the Outreach EWs make program presentations, distribute marketing materials and conduct pre-screening events.
- DPSS continues to outstation Food Stamp Intake Eligibility Workers at 11 Department of Community and Senior Services (CSS) emergency food distribution sites, including Senior Centers. Outreach EWs perform outreach and accept applications at these sites.
- In February 2006, our Department implemented a collaborative pilot, outstationing Food Stamp Intake Eligibility Workers at four Department of Community and Senior Services (CSS) WorkSource Centers. Efforts at these sites include making presentations, performing outreach and accepting applications for both Food Stamps and Medi-Cal. Together with CSS, we are currently planning the expansion of this effort to 20 of their WorkSource Centers. Implementation is targeted for March 2007.

- DPSS continues to partner with the Mexican Consulate in Los Angeles, to provide Food Stamp outreach materials to their visitors. The Consulate will notify the Department if they decide to expand this effort to include further Food Stamp outreach activities.
- Our Department completed a successful six-month pilot on December 30 2005, to test the effectiveness of joint Medi-Cal/Food Stamp outreach workers. The pilot included the testing of two models. One used five Outreach EWs from a traditional district office. The other used five Outreach EWs from a Medi-Cal Outreach District. These EWs performed outreach, and accepted and assisted with Food Stamp and Medi-Cal applications at non-traditional sites.

Due to the success of this pilot, we are developing procedures to expand and continue with this effort on an ongoing basis. This project is targeted for implementation in March 2007.

- Food Stamp outreach continues to be conducted with families and individuals receiving Medi-Cal, who do not receive Food Stamp benefits. During the yearly review for ongoing Medi-Cal cases, EWs are sending Food Stamp applications to potentially eligible households. Similarly, families and individuals applying for Medi-Cal continue to be encouraged to apply for Food Stamp benefits. "Ask Me About Food Stamps" buttons have also been provided to District Medi-Cal eligibility staff to supplement outreach efforts.

Additionally, the Medi-Cal Redeterminations Due Listing now includes an identifier, to assist eligibility staff in targeting households which are potentially Food Stamp eligible. An application and information sheet are then mailed to the household, encouraging them to apply for Food Stamp benefits.

- DPSS continues to collaborate with Covina School District to enhance our Countywide Food Stamp Outreach Campaign. Covina School District includes Food Stamp outreach flyers in each Free School Lunch Program mail packet, with information on how to apply for benefits. We are exploring the feasibility of expanding our collaborative efforts with other school districts throughout Los Angeles County.
- Our Department's Restaurant Meals Program continues to assist homeless, elderly and disabled Food Stamp participants in purchasing prepared meals at restaurants authorized by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). As of January 24, 2007, DPSS has signed MOUs with 261 restaurants. Of these, 200 are operational, 21 are approved by USDA, but non-operational, and 40 are currently in the USDA authorization process.

- The Department regularly conducts Food Stamp outreach and accepts Food Stamp applications at a mandatory orientation session, offered monthly to recently released inmates by the Department of Corrections. We continue discussing with them the feasibility of expanding this effort to include more orientation sites.
- DPSS continues to collaborate with the Department of Children and Family Services to expand Food Stamp outreach to Foster Care Transitional Centers. Foster care youth who have reached 18 years of age will be able to apply for benefits with Outreach EWs visiting those sites. This effort is in the planning stages.
- To maximize the effectiveness of this campaign, we contracted with a social marketing expert, funded by the Quality and Productivity Commission, to develop a media strategy and marketing materials that reach our target population. Materials developed by this expert were printed in August 2006, and are distributed to District outreach staff on an ongoing basis.
- The Community-Based (CBO) and Faith-Based Organization (FBO) Food Stamp Application Assistance Project involves contracting with CBOs and FBOs with the goal of assisting potentially eligible Food Stamp applicants in completing the application and providing it, with all required supporting documentation, to DPSS. A \$40 payment to the CBO/FBO will only be made for applications with complete documentation, which result in approval. The CBO/FBO project is targeted for implementation in Summer 2007.
- We implemented a 60-Day Food Stamp Advertising Campaign in January 2007, that will maximize the effectiveness of the Outreach Campaign and dispel myths and misconceptions by clarifying Food Stamp eligibility rules. Advertisements in English and Spanish are in newspapers, posted on MTA bus placards, as well as being aired over the radio.

Increasing Food Stamp participation among eligible households continues to be a priority for DPSS, in partnership with a wide variety of community partners. I will continue to report to you on the progress of our Food Stamp Outreach efforts on a semi-annual basis.

BY:ms

c: Chief Administrative Officer
County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors